A STUDY OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE SELECT PLAYS OF SATISH ALEKAR

A

SYNOPSIS

SUBMITTED TO

SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTH MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY

NANDED, MAHARASHTRA

FOR THE REGISTRATION

OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

ENGLISH

By

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UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

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2021-2022

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INTRODUCTION

The dramatic form is not new in India. It has a grand history claiming its existence in the Vedic period. Tagore, the first major playwright, not only used drama with his lyrical excellence, symbolism and allegorical significance but also made them popular at the national and international level. Further, the dramatists such as ManjeriIsvaran, Nissim Ezekiel, LakhanDev, Gurucharan Das, G.V. Dasoni, Pratap Sharma, AsifCurrimbhoy, Gieve Patel and PritishNandy made a significant contribution in uplifting the Indian English drama. Contemporary Indian drama reached a new height with its experimental and innovative techniques regarding themes and technical qualities. A cumulative theatrical tradition evolved by Mohan Rakesh, BadalSircar, Vijay Tendulkar and GirishKarnad, prepared the background of contemporary Indian English theatre.

Modern drama developed under the rule of the British in the 18th century. It clearly shows the impact of Western civilization on Indian life as well as a new renaissance dawned on Indian arts including drama. MadhusudanDutt's contribution proved significant. He was a sincere and creative writer. There were no serious efforts in this field at least for two decades.

Western counties show a keen interest in Indian culture and literature in the post-independence era. There was a fairly good output of literary forms. The significant contributions were ManjeriIsvaran, Nissim Ezekiel, LakhanDev, Gurucharan Das, G.V. Dasani, Pratap Sharma, AsifCurrimbhoy, Gieve Patel and PritishNandy. All of these are made a significant contribution in uplifting the Indian English drama.

SatishAlekar, one of the most influential playwrights along with Mahesh Elkunchwar and Vijay Tendulkar, is a Marathi playwright. Besides, he is an actor, director and founder member of the Theatre-Academy of Pune. He was born in Delhi on 30 January 1949 but brought up in Pune, Maharashtra. He completed his education in Marathi medium school and higher education (B.Sc.) through Fergusson College. He received his master`s degree in biochemistry from Pune University in 1972.

SatishAlekar, the Padamshree (2012), began his career as an actor in a college play. In 1969, he wrote and directed his first one-act play Jhulta Pool. Initially, he was a member of the Progressive Dramatic Association started by Jabbar Patel. Later on, he was associated with Theatre Academy in Pune. Alekar is known for his experiments in Marathi theatre. He acted in Marathi and Hindi films, serials and commercials. He wrote the scripts for the National Film Award-winning Marathi film **Jait re Jait** directed by Jabbar Patel. He directed a serial for Doordarshan entitled DekhoMagarPyar Se. He was awarded the SangeetNatakAkademi Award in Playwritting in 1994 for his contribution to regional language Marathi.

SatishAlekar, the distinguished Professor on the Pune University Campus, is the recipient of several national and state awards for his contribution to the field of theatre and literature. His original Marathi plays are – MickiAaniMemsaheb (1973), Mahanirvan (1974), Mahapoor (1975), Begum Barve (1979), ShanwarRaviwar (1982), DusraSamana (1987), Atireki (1990), Pidhijat (2003), EkdivasMathakade (2012) and ThakashiSanvad (2020). His original Marathi one-act plays are listed as Memory (1969), Bhajan (1969), EkJhulta Pool (1971), Dar KoniUdhadatNaahi (1979) and Bus Stop (1980). Besides, he also worked as translator as well as directed the plays.

The researcher aims to study socio-cultural aspects in SatishAlekar`s*Mahaniravan* (The Dread Departure), *Mahapoor* (Deluge), *Atireki*

(the Terrorist), *Pidhijat* (the Dynasts), *BegumBarve* and *Mickey* and *the Memsahib.*

The *Dread Departure* is one of the earliest plays of SatishAlekar. It is an unusual play. The theme of the play is so apt and relevant to socio-cultural aspects. The Dread Departure deals with death and cremation which defuses the sense of horror surrounding it showing it as an everyday occurrence by using the surrealistic fantasy. As the play is about a man`s death, Alekarunmistakably depicts the religious rituals and traditions that are related to death and after death. Alekar`s main focal point is not to glorify the rituals but to mock the malpractices and blind belief which are prevailing and dominating over the centuries in society. It has been translated and performed in more than 10 languages across the country with 400 shows. The play is aptly hailed as a milestone in the history of Indian Theatre. The play is fine example of blending humour and black comedy. It highlights the intricacies of human relations and emotional ethos.

His play *Begum Barve*presents the painful situations of Jawdekar, Bawadekar, Shyamrao and Begum Barve. They have created a fantasy of Sarangnayana for their own meaningless and sterile life. The play is set in a particular place without unusual reference and locations. It is set in the places like the road, tea canteen beside the road, staircase of the apartment and rooms where the characters live. All these characters face the reality of their meaningless, bored and unbearable life. They live only in their fantasy.

He wrote Micky and Memsahib when he was just twenty one years old. It was his first full-length play which was staged in December 1973. The play is in two acts set in the same place. It presents situation after situation and constitutes neither a plot nor a story. Alekar has blended realism with fantasy in the play.

His play *Mahapoor* or *Deluge* is a case study of a psychologically disturbed protagonist Govinda. There is no consecutive is situation of the story

Govinda and his family what the play constitutes is situation after situation, interrupted at times by fantasy, parody and so on. In both the Acts, the audience observes the play of real-world and the play of the world of fantasy and both the worlds ultimately convey the shattered world of Govinda in which he has lost his identity.

The Terrorist by SatishAlekar shows the elements of absurdism in it. There are songs, monologues, repetition, non-contextual changes of topic, the characters and their introduction as well as a sudden change in their behaviourdue to the changed situation and absurd conversations give hint of the absurdism. The theme of the playmaking of a terrorist gives an absurd but string to the society. The play "The Terrorist" is divided into two acts. Act one has four scenes and act two three scenes. The play has fifteen characters, the major ones being Madhavrao, Manda, Malvika, Bapurao. Bhavna and Bab.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Amrita Sengar

In her paper "Indian Drama in English", Amrita talks about the glorious and wonderful tradition of Drama in India, the challenges that it faces and the experiments done in Indian Drama by contemporary dramatists. From Bhasa and Kalidasa to Mahesh Dattani and ManjulaPadmanabhan. The paper studies the drama and the thematic concern of various playwrights in India.

Anita Sharma

In her paper "Modern Indian English Drama", the flaws of Indian English Drama and the contribution of Modern Indian English Playwright is studied. The playwrights like Sri Aurobindo and Rabindranath Tagore were influenced by the Elizabethan Drama and the modern playwright like Kernad and Tendulkar who pay more attention to Indian themes and context are

compared. The modern Indian playwrights challenge the stage formed by the previous dramatists. They have the genius to provide aesthetic pleasure from mundane situations.

Dr. S. Krishna Bhatta

In the book "Indian English Drama: A Critical Study", Dr. Bhatta has titled a chapter "Indian English Drama: Why MeagreAchievement". The reasons for the lagging behind of the genre of Drama in Indian English works are discussed. The want of a living theatre, the failure to employ rich folk forms and techniques, the need for constant experimentation and the failure to tackle the problem of language result in meager achievements. A modern interpretation of the acient folklore, finding the roots in the culture and using them in the plays and a will to experiment is the keynote for successful playwright.

AlkaSaxena

The absurd scene or attempt to kill and further complications in Alekar`s play "Deluge" makes this paper an important part of the literature review. In her paper, "It`s a Bloody Stage", Saxena talk about The Violence shown in various plays. Many aspects of violence are experienced in our daily lives. Violence in myriad forms has set the stage on fire – it`s a blood-staged! The violence is multifaceted and it is not only physical but also mental, emotional, subtle and indirect. The occurrence of human violence is a basic quality, it is innate.

AnjuBalaAgrawal

The paper "Patriarchal Mechanics if Oppression: Images of women in Contemporary Indian English Drama" talks about the oppression of women in patriarchy as presented in contemporary Indian English Drama and drama in translation. The paper exerts that the contemporary Indian drama reveals the andandrocentric bias of the prevailing patriarchal order.

Dr. Sohel Aziz

The plays “Deluge”,“Dynasts” and “The Terrorist” by SatishAlekar talk about the long-established socio-cultural issues such as caste system in the society. In his article “Struggle for equality; Voice of Protest and Resistance in Vinodini`s Thirst.”, Aziz deals with the problem of untouchability in a Dalit village and the way the Dalit are oppressed and subjugated by the upper castes in the name of religion. If focuses on now the Dalits came forward and unite against the upper caste.

Monika Dhillon

SatishAlekar, “Mickey and the Memnsahib” talks about an Amazonian woman. In her paper, “Reviving the Myth, Revisiting the Vanquished: A Study of VarshaAdalaja`sMandodari”, Dhillon presents a new idea based on a mythological concept. The character of Mandodari is a mouthpiece of all those wives and mothers who are the victims of the futility of wars done by the menfolk. The extent up to which a wife and a queen can go to save her husband and her kingdom respectively.Humanaity is much higher than any abstract notion of womanhood. The play presents the fact that it is absurd and illogical to confine any person to age-old traditions and concepts.

GrishmaManekraoKhobragade

SatishAlkeka, “The Dread Departure” is about the relationships of a father and a son. In this paper “Social Reality of Caste Hierarchy: GirishKarnad`s The Fire and The Rain”, the detailed analysis of the play, The Fire and The Rain based on the caste issues and the relations between the father and his sons and between two brothers is done. The role of jealousy and insecurity in spoiling relations is presented. The difference between knowledge and wisdom and the role of jealousy and insecurity in spiling the relationship is seen.

G. Kiran Kumar Reddy

SatishAlekar, "Begum Barve" talks about the societal norms and through the character of Barve, represents thousands of people like him. In his paper "Hegemony Element in the play of BadalSircar`sBhoma", Reddy prsents a similar scene through the life of the oppressed peasant in Indian rural society where he is socially and economically exploited. The lovelessness in the life of the common man is also incorporated in the play. The character of Bhoma is similar to that of Barve in ways more than one. The landlords exploit the poor peasants in the villages and the industrialists exploit the craftsmen in the cities, just like Barve was exploited by his 'master'. Competitiveness and individualism make people loveless and materialistic. They strain the relationships.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the research can be summarized as follows:

1. The main objective of this research is to focus on the socio-cultural issues in English translations of the plays of SatishAlekar
2. It is an attempt to find out customs, lifestyles and values prevalent in the Indian Society.
3. The research will also deal with the forces within the culture and societies that affect the thoughts, feelings and behaviors
4. The present study aims to understand cultural identity, deprivation, caste-system, cross-cultural differences and ethnic identiy.
5. The study will also analyse the theatrical elements of the Threatre of the absurd in the select plays.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The proposed research is pursued by using the basic methods of literary research such as close reading, explication, illustration and analysis of literacy the major focus is on the socio-cultural aspects in English

Translation of the critical analysis is the central agenda of the proposed research. Since the researcher would like to undertake a deep critical study of the plays, the methodology of research adopted for this work will be interpretative and analytical. This thesis will also attempt to study the theatrical elements of the Theatre of the Absurd in the plays of SatishAlekar.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH WORK

The present study of the socio-cultural aspect is quite significant. This study is significant as it tries to analyze how a common human being is suffered while trying hard to establish his identity. The study is also important as it focuses on the basic form of representation of life in the real sense and how it is marginalized by society. English translation of the selected plays of SatishAlekar bring out the absurdity of life in an Indian context.

SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The broad area of the present study is the study of socio-cultural aspects in English translations of the SatishAlekar`s select plays. It is significant to study the playwright from this point of view as it will give us a complete insight to understand the nature and temperament of the society.

The present study will be confined to SatishAlekar`s following select plays:

The Dread Departure

Deluge

The Terrorist

The Dynasts

Begum Barve

Mickey and the Memsahib

THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH WORK:

The present study aims at exploring the analysis of socio-cultural aspects in SatishAlekar's plays. He is innovative and experimental. His work exploits certain socio-cultural issues. He also deals with the elements ofabsurdism. His plays highlight the intricacies of human relations and human ethos. His plays show a rich sense of black humour and pure fun.

OUTILNE OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter 1: Chapter 1 of this Research is the Introduction. In this chapter, the researcher will carry out a brief survey of Indian English Drama.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2 of the Research will deal with the Socio-cultural aspect in the *Dread Departure* and *Deluge*

Chapter 3: In this chapter of the Research, the researcher will make a systematic study of the Socio-cultural aspect as depicted in *The Terrorist* and *The Dynasis.*

Chapter 4: In Chapter 4, the researcher will focus on socio-cultural aspects in the plays entitled *Begum Barve* and *Mickey and the Memsahib.*

Chapter 5: Chapter5 of this Thesis is the conclusion. In this chapter, the researcher is going, to sum up, the overall tone and message delivered in SatishAlekar's plays.

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